Satpal Ram

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Satpal Ram is a British man of asian descent who was charged and convicted of killing another man named Clarke Pierce in Birmingham, England during a racially charged fight in 1986. His case has drawn some controversy due to alleged mistreatment by the courts and the British prison system due to his racial background.[1]

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Background

According to **Satpal Ram,** he and two friends visited a restaurant in November 1986. While there, an altercation broke out among Ram and his two friends and six drunken caucasian men also in the restaurant. The argument, which was over asian music being played on the restaurant's radio system became a physical fight. One of the men, Clarke Pierce, smashed a glass and used this to attack Satpal. Satpal claimed to have acted in self defence by using a small Stanley knife he had in his pocket to defend himself and injuring Clarke Pierce.

Clarke Pierce was later taken to hospital where he refused treatment and discharged himself. He died a day later in his home. Consequently, **Satpal Ram** was arrested for murder and convicted in 1987. [2]

Controversy

Later debate and controversy arose among the British media when it was alleged that his barrister did not meet with him and only saw him for about 40 minutes before the trial. The all-white jury was claimed to have also missed vital evidence because no interpreter was provided to translate for Ram. The judge was to have said he would interpret but also that he couldn't speak the Bengali Language.

Other reports of Ram being beaten, starved, repeatedly strip-searched, and being made to spend large periods of time in solitary confinement also arose, resulting in accusations of racism within the criminal justice system.[3]

The protest for Ram's release from prison involved a song by the Asian Dub Foundation entitled "Free Satpal Ram".

Release

Satpal Ram was released from prison on parole in June 2002. His initial release as recommended by the parole board in 2000, was overturned by the Home Secretary at the time, Jack Straw, because Ram refused to admit his guilt. His release in 2002 resulted from a European Court of Human Rights ruling government executives such as the Home Secretary had no right to overrule a decision of a parole board. [4]

References

1. ^ http://www.ncrm.org.uk/campaigns/ram.html - Retrieved: April 25, 2007
2. ^ http://www.innocent.org.uk/cases/satpalram/index.html#grauniad200901 - Retrieved: April 25, 2007
3. ^ http://www.guardian.co.uk/racism/Story/0,2763,193365,00.html - Retrieved: April 25, 2007
4. ^ http://www.blink.org.uk/pdescription.asp?key=847&mid=&grp=2&cat=169 - Retrieved: April 25, 2007

External links

- Satpal Ram is Guilty - A website presenting opposing viewpoints on Satpal Ram's release.
- Satpal Ram on www.innocent.org.uk - Archive of articles by the British newspaper "The Guardian" regarding Satpal Ram.

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Categories: Murderers | Human rights abuses

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